DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 376 344 CE 067 644

AUTHOR Voss, Cameron
TITLE Learner-Centered Alternative Assessment of Student Progress. Final Narrative Report and Appendices.
INSTITUTION Lutheran Social Mission Society, Philadelphia, PA. Lutheran Settlement House.
SPONS AGENCY Pennsylvania State Dept. of Education, Harrisburg. Bureau of Adult Basic and Literacy Education.
PUB DATE Aug 94
CONTRACT 98-4036
NOTE 72p.
PUB TYPE Reports - Descriptive (141)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC03 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Adult Basic Education; Adult Literacy; *Evaluation Methods; *Literacy Education; *Models; Nontraditional Education; Questionnaires; School Surveys; Student Attitudes; *Student Evaluation; Teacher Attitudes; Urban Areas; Urban Education; *Womens Education
IDENTIFIERS 353 Project; *Alternative Assessment; General Educational Development Tests

ABSTRACT

A women's program worked to develop procedures for assessing student progress that would help prevent the sense of failure that women reading at low grade levels often develop after failing to pass the General Educational Development (GED) Test quickly. An on-site assessment research group was formed. The group's curriculum developer created three student and teacher surveys and interviewed teachers and administrators. Three pre-GED teachers worked with their classes to set goals and construct assessment instruments to determine whether the goals were being met. A graduate student observed the teachers' classes, and the teachers field tested each others' alternative assessment activities. The survey, interview, and observation findings were synthesized into a model for developing/implementing learner-centered alternative assessment as an ongoing component of instruction. According to student and teacher feedback, the model assessment procedure informs and motivates students as they are empowered to measure their own programs and helps instructors select effective instructional practices and materials. Appendixes constituting approximately 75% of this document include the following: assessment research group meeting agendas, surveys, interview questions, assessment instruments with comments by teachers, and proposed new assessment policy. Contains a 24-item bibliography. (MN)

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ED 376 344

# Learner-Centered Alternative Assessment of Student Progress

## Final Narrative Report and Appendices

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# Learner-Centered Alternative Assessment of Student Progress

## Final Narrative Report and Appendices

**Developed by:**
**Cameron Voss**
**August 1994**

**Lutheran Settlement House**
**Women's Program**
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# Acknowledgements

*Learner-Centered Alternative Assessment of Student Progress* would not have been possible without the help of many people.

Ellen Farrell, Alice Redman, and Theresa Waltz conducted the teacher research that formed the backbone of this project. These three busy teachers from the Lutheran Settlement House Women's Program enthusiastically participated in the Assessment Research Group and spent time in their Pre-GED classes pondering the topic of assessment. They also helped me prepare this Final Narrative Report by writing pieces for the Appendices and reading drafts of the report.

Many thanks go out to the Pre-GED students from classes at the LSH Women's Program who shared their views on setting goals and assessing progress.

Kathy Andrews-Williams, Education Unit Coordinator, and Mary Taylor, Teacher Supervisor, also participated in the Assessment Research Group and provided advice throughout the year. LSH Women's Program Director Amelia Belardo-Cox inspired all of us with her insights and ideas for program development.

The development of this project was greatly supported by the Adult Literacy Practitioner Inquiry Project (ALPIP) sponsored by the National Center on Adult Literacy at the University of Pennsylvania. This group met throughout the year to discuss assessment issues in adult literacy. Eileen Barry, a graduate student in Reading, Writing & Literacy and a co-facilitator of the ALPIP group helped me a lot by coming to the Assessment Research Group meetings, observing classes, and analyzing the data with me. Professor Susan Lytle helped me focus my research on the Assessment Research Group and introduced me to the concept of assessment "practices." ALPIP co-facilitators Daryl Gordon, Elizabeth Cantafio and Ashley Stoudt also provided me with valuable insights into teacher research and writing. I learned a lot from the following ALPIP participants, who followed the progress of my project: Ben Burenstein, Richard Drucker, Jean Fleschute, Pat Haff, Lynette Hazelton, Peggy McGuire, and Royalann Midgette.

Finally, I extend many thanks to the Pennsylvania Department of Education for funding this special demonstration project. Cheryl L. Keenan, Director of the Bureau of Adult Basic and Literacy Education, Don Lunday, Chief of the Special Programs and Projects Section and Ella Morin, Special Demonstration Projects Advisor provided technical assistance, advice, and encouragement.

# Learner-Centered Alternative Assessment of Student Progress

**Final Narrative Report and Appendices**

Project Number: 98-4036

Fiscal Year: 1993-1994

Grant Amount: $17,162


Pennsylvania State Department of Education
Division of Adult Basic and Literacy Education
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Date completed: June 30, 1994

"The activity which is the subject of this report was supported in part by the U.S. Department of Education. However, the opinions expressed herein do not necessarily reflect the position or policy of the U.S. Department of Education or the Pennsylvania Department of Education, and no official endorsement by these agencies should be inferred."

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# Abstract

**Title:** Learner-Centered Alternative Assessment of Student Progress

**Project No.:** 98-4036 **Funding:** $17,162

**Project Director:** Amelia Belardo-Cox **Phone No.:** (215) 426-8610

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1340 Frankford Avenue, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania 19125

**Purpose:** Students reading between levels 5-8 often have "passing the GED" test as their primary goal. If they do not pass it quickly, they often feel that they have failed. To address this problem, the LSH Women's Program created an on-site Assessment Research Group. Three Pre -GED teachers worked with students to set goals for improving their basic skills on the way to the GED. They constructed alternative assessment instruments to assess students' progress towards their educational goals. The agency adapted its official documented assessment policy to incorporate the group's ideas. Although the primary audience for this project was Pre-GED students and teachers, the process of developing and implementing new assessment methods is a model for integrating learner-centered alternative assessment into all levels of adult literacy programs and classes.

**Procedures:** An Assessment Research Group consisting of three Pre-GED teachers, a Curriculum Developer, the Teacher Supervisor, the Education Unit Coordinator, and a graduate student met five times during the year. The Curriculum Developer created three surveys for students and teachers. The teachers worked with their classes to set goals and construct assessment instruments to determine if students were meeting the goals. The teachers recorded and documented the information they obtained. The Curriculum Developer interviewed the teachers and administrators. The graduate student observed the teachers' classes. Teachers field tested each others' alternative assessment activities. The group gave a presentation at an agency Teachers' Meeting. The group evaluated the project and reported to the agency on plans to implement the proposed changes.

**Summary of Findings:** The Assessment Research Group developed, published, and disseminated a model for developing and implementing learner-centered alternative assessment that is an ongoing component of instruction. The project was evaluated through a series of surveys and interviews with participants. Learner-centered assessment informs and motivates students as they are empowered to measure their own progress towards educational goals, provides instructors with feedback which will inform instructional practice and materials selection, and provides administrators with a comprehensive evaluation of program effectiveness when combined with quantitative data.

**Comments:** The objectives of this project were to create an alternative assessment process that empowers teachers and students to more effectively evaluate practice and progress in the adult education classroom, to examine program design and curriculum needs identified through student assessment, and to document and disseminate a model of assessment development. These objectives were all met. The evaluation section of the project was changed from a standardized test comparison to an evaluation based on surveys and interviews with participants.

**Products:** The Final Narrative Report documents the teachers' development of alternative assessment methods and evaluates the effectiveness of the project. The Appendices include documents relevant to the development of the model and some alternative assessment tools which the teachers used to supplement standardized evaluation.

**Descriptors:**

# Final Narrative Report

## Introduction

The Lutheran Settlement House Women's Program is located in the Kensington section of Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, and serves the Philadelphia community. Since 1976, our mission has been to provide professional, sociai, and educational services that support adults and their families in achieving their goals of self-sufficiency and empowerment. We offer comprehensive programming and multiple services to counteract the economic and social barriers that keep low-income individuals from attaining personal, educational, and employment goals.

The Women's Program does not discriminate against any individual because of race, sex, age, religious affiliation, national origin, sexual preference, marital status, handicap, or against any veteran. We are handicap/wheelchair accessible. The LSH Women's Program enforces this non-discrimination policy which remains on file.

Throughout the last 18 years, the Women's Program has successfully provided quality Adult Basic Education instruction, GED preparation, English as a Second Language (ESL), and family and workplace literacy instruction to over 15,000 program participants. Participants are able to access other Women's Program support services including employment and training programs and bilingual domestic violence counseling.

In the Women's Program's Adult Basic Education, GED, and ESL classes, we provide educational instruction that allows participants to work and excel at their own pace instead of promoting uniformity and grade levels. The curriculum focuses on the participants' needs and promotes critical thinking. Lifeskills materials are incorporated into instruction.

Students who read between level 5 and 8 often enter Adult Basic Education classes with the single goal of getting a high school equivalency diploma (GED), but generally need to enhance their academic skills before being qualified to take the GED test. These students are often unrealistic in their expectations of the time this goal may require and they often become frustrated

and drop out of classes when they do not see the quick progress they anticipated. In this project a group of teachers worked with Pre-GED students to develop a process for setting short-term goals that are attainable, yet at the same time, show progress towards their long term goal of obtaining a GED. In order to help students to appreciate the progress they make and understand the time and effort necessary for meeting their long term goals, the Women's Program decided to work on integrating learner-centered alternative assessment into our Adult Basic Education classes.

This project was a continuation of work done by Women's Program staff members at the Adult Literacy Practitioner Inquiry Project (ALPIP) and the Program Based version of ALPIP sponsored by the National Center on Adult Literacy at the University of Pennsylvania. The Curriculum Developer on this project has participated in ALPIP for two years. In 1992-93, she worked on an inquiry project involving students' views of standardized and non-traditional methods of assessing their progress. Also in 1992-93, several teachers and administrators from various units of the Women's Program investigated issues related to alternative assessment. Much of this work stemmed from the fact that the current official assessment practices were not congruent with what was happening in the classroom or in the program as a whole. Teachers and administrators aimed to expand the assessment policy but did not have a mechanism for implementing the changes they discussed. Based on a year of preliminary investigation, the Education Unit applied for and received a 353 grant to develop, document, evaluate, and implement learner-centered alternative assessment instruments for the Pre-GED level classroom. The audience for the grant was students, teachers and administrators at the LSH Women's Program and other adult literacy programs.

During the time period from September 1993 - June 1994, three Pre-GED teachers (Ellen Farrell, Alice Redman, and Theresa Waltz) piloted learner-centered alternative assessment instruments such as interviews, surveys, journals, progress charts, observations, and portfolios, and integrated them into instruction so that students were able to track and assess their learning progress on an ongoing basis. The teachers met periodically with the Curriculum Developer (Cameron Voss), two Unit administrators (Kathy Andrews-Williams and Mary Taylor), and a

graduate student (Eileen Barry) to discuss issues relating to alternative assessment and plan for implementing changes in the Education Unit policies. Amelia Belardo-Cox, Director of the LSH Women's Program, ensured smooth operation of the project.

The project will be disseminated through the following sources, where permanent copies of the report will be filed:

The Pennsylvania Department of Education
Bureau of Adult Basic and Literacy Education
333 Market Street
Harrisburg, PA 17126-0333

The Pennsylvania Department of Education
AdvancE
333 Market Street
Harrisburg, PA 17126-0333

The Western Pennsylvania Adult Literacy Resource Center
5347 William Flynn Highway, Route 8
Gibsonia, PA 15044-9644

Lutheran Settlement House Women's Program
1340 Frankford Avenue
Philadelphia, PA 19125

## Goal and Objectives

The problem that this project addressed was the need to revise the Lutheran Settlement House Women's Program Education Unit's assessment policy to include documented alternative assessment.

Goal: To develop, publish, and disseminate a model for developing and implementing learner-centered alternative assessment that is an ongoing component of instruction and which will: 1.) More fully inform and motivate students as they are empowered to measure their own progress towards educational goals, 2.) Provide instructors with feedback which will inform instructional practice and materials selection, and 3.) Provide administrators with a comprehensive evaluation of program effectiveness when combined with quantitative data.

*The Assessment Research Group, coordinated by the Curriculum Developer, developed, published, and disseminated a model for developing and implementing learner-centered alternative assessment that is an ongoing component of instruction. The Evaluation section of this Final Narrative Report will detail the ways in which this three-part goal was achieved.*

Objective 1: To create an alternative assessment process that will empower teachers and students to more effectively evaluate practice and progress in the adult education classroom. *The Assessment Research Group created an alternative assessment process that empowers teachers and students to more effectively evaluate practice and progress in the adult education classroom. It is documented in the Appendices.*

Method 1: Determine goals for instruction and assessment. *Teachers formulated and discussed their goals for instruction at the first meeting of the Assessment Research Group. At subsequent meetings they reviewed their goals to see if they were meeting them.*

Method 2: Examine alternative assessment methodologies used in other programs. *The Assessment Research Group discussed assessment methodologies used in other programs. The Curriculum Developer recommended articles on the topic of assessment to expand the background knowledge of the staff members participating in the project. A Bibliography is included in the Appendices.*

Method 3: Develop surveys to evaluate kinds of information needed and gained through standardized and alternative assessment instruments. *The Curriculum Developer created introductory surveys for teachers and*

*students. They are attached in the Appendices.*

Method 4: Design alternative assessment instruments and pilot them in classes. *The teachers designed alternative assessment instruments and piloted them in classes. The instruments are attached in the Appendices.*

Method 5: Evaluate alternative assessment outcomes and make adjustments to design. *The teachers and students evaluated the alternative assessment instruments through surveys and discussions and adjusted their design.*

Method 6: Field test alternative assessment instruments. *The teachers field tested the instruments designed by each other.*

Method 7: Compare results of alternative assessment instruments by conducting survey of information needed and gained. *The Curriculum Developer created mid-year and post-surveys for teachers and students. They are attached in the Appendices.*

Objective 2: To examine program design and curriculum needs identified through student assessment. *The Assessment Research Group examined program design and curriculum needs identified through student assessment.*

Method 1: Analyze student surveys for comparison of goals and outcomes. *Teachers analyzed the surveys their students completed and discussed them in the Assessment Research Group. The Curriculum Developer analyzed the student surveys to evaluate the project.*

Method 2: Analyze teacher surveys and compare results of instruction with students' goals and outcomes. *Teachers analyzed the surveys they completed and discussed them in the Assessment Research Group. The Curriculum Developer analyzed the teacher surveys to evaluate the project.*

Method 3: Make recommendations for future program/curriculum change where indicated. *Several programatic and curricular changes have been proposed, including the structure of the classes and the ways in which students will be assessed.*

Objective 3: To document and disseminate a model of assessment development in a report. *A model of assessment development was documented and is detailed in this Final Narrative Report and in the Appendices.*

Method 1: Compile assessment instruments, surveys, information from development sessions, analysis of evaluation, and recommendations. Develop assessment instrument packet and manual and complete final report. *The assessment instruments, surveys, information from development sessions, analysis of evaluation, and recommendations are in the Appendices to the Final Narrative Report.*

Method 2: Present report to local, regional, and state level staff development workshops. *A workshop was presented at an agency teachers' meeting. Two workshops were presented as part of the Region 9 Staff Development series. A workshop was presented at an agency general staff meeting. Additional workshops will be presented at local, regional, and state level staff development workshops.*

## Procedures

In order to develop and implement learner-centered alternative assessment of students' progress, the Curriculum Developer organized an Assessment Research Group in September. The Assessment Research Group consisted of three Pre-GED teachers, the Curriculum Developer, the Teacher Supervisor, the Education Unit Coordinator, and a graduate student studying Reading, Writing & Literacy at the University of Pennsylvania. The graduate student and the Curriculum Developer were also a part of the 1993-94 Adult Literacy Practitioner Inquiry Project (ALPIP) sponsored by the National Center on Adult Literacy at the University of Pennsylvania, which focussed on issues of alternative assessment practices. The Assessment Research Group met formally five times during the year.

In October, the Curriculum Developer created a pre-survey for students covering their academic goals, uses of literacy in their lives, strategies for self-assessment, and what they need and gain from assessment instruments. The participating teachers administered the survey in their classes. The Curriculum Developer also created a pre-survey for teachers covering their goals for teaching and what they need and gain from assessment.

In November, the first Assessment Research Group meeting covered developing goals statements for classroom instruction and assessment, completing the teacher surveys and comparing them to the student surveys, defining "on-going" "learner-centered" "assessment," discussing how other programs do assessment, distributing literature on the topic of alternative assessment, reviewing alternative methods of assessment, and planning activities to do in the classroom which center around setting goals and measuring progress toward them. In the weeks following the meeting the three teachers worked with their Pre-GED classes to set goals and co-construct assessment instruments to determine if students were meeting their individual academic goals. Feedback from students helped the teachers to design the curriculum for the classroom and to determine if the class was meeting the students' needs. Throughout this project, the teachers collected the documents produced by the assessment activities in their classrooms, such as student

writings, progress charts, and notes from individual conferences.

The Curriculum Developer met individually with the three participating teachers in January to discuss classroom culture, what assessment was already going on in their classes prior to this project, experience with new methods of assessment in the classroom, and what would be the ideal assessment for this program.

In February, the graduate student observed classes of the three teachers and took field notes on the assessment practices she noticed. The teachers were encouraged to share these field notes with the students. The Assessment Research Group met for the second time in February to discuss the graduate student's classroom observations, report on developing the goals setting and assessment activities, discuss the agency's current assessment policy and how it could change, discuss how to get student input into the process of assessment, and plan a report to the agency's part time teachers. In the weeks following the meeting, the three teachers continued to work with their classes, piloting the assessment instruments they had developed. They also began to exchange information and experiment with the assessment instruments each other had developed.

The Curriculum Developer created a mid-survey for students covering their progress toward academic goals, evaluation of assessment activities used in the classroom, relation of classroom activity to goals, and changes in uses of literacy. The participating teachers administered the mid-survey in their classes in March. The Curriculum Developer also created a mid-survey for teachers covering their progress towards their goals for teaching and whether they were getting the information they needed from the assessment activities they were doing. The teachers filled out the surveys. The Assessment Research Group met for the third time in March to review the students' and teachers' mid-surveys, discuss the graduate student's classroom observations and how to share them with students, discuss an article about alternative assessment, evaluate and suggest adjustments in the assessment activities, discuss field-testing other teachers' methods, review the cycle of assessment from intake through on-going classroom assessment to final evaluation, and discuss the structure of the unit staff. Following the meeting, teachers continued to field test each others' activities. The Curriculum Developer met again individually

with the three participating teachers in March to discuss developments in the project and plans for next year. She also interviewed the Teacher Supervisor, Education Coordinator, and Program Director about the same issues.

In April, the Curriculum Developer and two of the teachers gave a presentation at an agency Teachers' Meeting. All of the teachers explained the assessment that goes on in their classroom and the Curriculum Developer listed the various practices on the blackboard. The teachers reflected on the word "assessment" and what it means to them in various contexts. The Curriculum Developer provided some background on the alternative assessment movement and on the project going on within the agency. Two of the teachers from the Assessment Research Group shared the techniques that they had been piloting in their classes. A discussion followed the presentation. The fourth meeting of the Assessment Research Group took place in April. Items for discussion included the Teachers' Meeting presentation, additional resources available about alternative assessment, alternatives and supplements to the year-end TABE post-testing, implications of our project on the clerical and administrative functions of our unit, teacher assessment, the validity of our conclusions for lower and higher level classes, and the process for writing and revising the Final Narrative Report.

In May, the graduate student observed the classes again. The Assessment Research Group met for the fifth and last time to review a draft of the Final Narrative Report, plan a procedure for evaluating the project, discuss implementation of the project's conclusions, and decide how to report the conclusions to the program administration.

In June, members of the Assessment Research Group presented their project as part of the Region 9 Staff Development series at two workshops called "Assessment and Testing." In July, the Curriculum Developer evaluated the project through surveys and interviews with participants in the project, including students, teachers, and administrators. The Assessment Research Group reported to program administration and staff at an agency full staff meeting. The Final Narrative Report was completed and sent to the Pennsylvania Department of Education in August. Presentations at local and state-wide staff development sessions are planned for the fall.

## Methods of Evaluation

The goal of this project was to develop, publish, and disseminate a model for developing and implementing learner-centered alternative assessment that is an ongoing component of instruction and which will: 1.) More fully inform and motivate students as they are empowered to measure their own progress towards educational goals, 2.) Provide instructors with feedback which will inform instructional practice and materials selection, and 3.) Provide administrators with a comprehensive evaluation of program effectiveness when combined with quantitative data. Each of the three parts of this goal was evaluated to determine if the overall goal was met and if the project was successful.

The method of evaluation changed from its original form. When the grant was written, an evaluation process based on the TABE test was included. A Control Group of students with no exposure to alternative assessment was supposed to be compared to the students in the classes participating in the project. This evaluation method was abandoned early on in the year for two main reasons. First of all, the Curriculum Developer felt that evaluating an alternative assessment project through a standardized test would not yield a rich sense of the success of the project and would be contradictory to the fundamental theories behind the project. It did not seem logical to attempt to quantitatively evaluate a project based on promoting qualitative evaluation. In addition, based on the discussion at an agency Teachers' Meeting, there are no classes at the Women's Program that exist in isolation from alternative assessment. All of the teachers here have been using it in their classrooms, despite the fact that the unit administration was not asking them to document it or include it in students' files. Thus, a Control Group would have been impossible to find. This change in the structure of the grant was reported to the Pennsylvania Department of Education in the Interim Report.

Because the original evaluation structure based on the TABE and the Control Group was set aside, the Assessment Research Group decided on a new Internal Evaluation method, concentrating on introductory, mid-year, and evaluative surveys for students, teachers, and

administrators, interviews with teachers and administrators, and conversations with teachers and administrators at the Assessment Research Group meetings.

## Results of Evaluation

The goal of the project was reached: a model for developing and implementing learner-centered alternative assessment that is an ongoing component of instruction was developed, published, and disseminated. The new evaluation process centered on determining whether the three purposes of developing learner-centered alternative assessment of students' progress, as stated in the grant, were realized.

The first purpose of *Learner-Centered Alternative Assessment of Students' Progress* was to more fully inform and motivate students as they are empowered to measure their own progress towards educational goals. In order to determine whether the students who participated in this project were empowered, informed, motivated, and able to self-assess their progress, teachers sought their students' opinions through a series of three surveys about assessment. When answering the first survey, students expressed that they were participating in the program in order to get a GED and eventually a job, and that they and their teacher measured their progress according to the TABE test. Students expressed interest in exploring their progress through increased one-on-one contact with their teacher that would give them a chance to talk and look over work. On the second survey, students were able to list many things that they felt they were improving in, and many mentioned that their self-esteem was higher due to being in class and working on achieving their goals. Many students were able to identify the new ways that people in their class kept track of their progress, such as keeping things in a folder, writing in journals, writing on charts, talking with the teacher, and reviewing work. Nobody mentioned the TABE as a way that they kept track of their progress in the class. On the evaluation survey, all students said that they set goals in class. Most students said that it is a combination of themselves and their teacher that checks to see if they are reaching their goals and making progress. By the end of the

project, students were able to self-assess: they could identify significant progress that they had made in their basic skills, and almost all said they felt good about the work they have done in class. The students frequently mentioned that they enjoyed talking individually to their teacher and reviewing work that they have done, and that they benefitted by working in groups with other students in the class. One student said, "Thanks to [my teacher], I know enough to help myself."

To see whether this project empowered the students who participated in it, the teachers also took into account their own observations of, and conversations with, students. They shared these anecdotes at the final meeting of the Assessment Research Group. Some of the Pre-GED level students independently finished their books and asked their teachers for the GED level books because they felt that they were ready to move on. One teacher said, "The students set their own goals. Quite a few have broken through and are free of my control ... although some are still reluctant to take control." Another teacher said, "The students have more control. Assessment is not something that is done to them." Another teacher said that the students became more involved with the assessment process than they had been with the TABE.

The second purpose of doing alternative assessment was to provide instructors with feedback which will inform instructional practice and materials selection. Based on the series of teacher surveys, it was clear that the way teachers were conducting their classes was affected by their paying more attention to ongoing assessment. On the first survey all three of the teachers answered that they talked to their students about their progress and their views of the class, but none of them were regularly documenting those conversations. Over the course of the year all three devised ways to keep records of individual conferences. The teacher surveys indicated that using alternative assessment in the classroom was providing teachers with more feedback than they had been getting in the past when they had to rely only on the intake sheet and the TABE. Two of the teachers mentioned in the surveys that alternative assessment lets them see which students might be in danger of "slipping through the cracks" and might need more individualized attention. One teacher wrote that assessment "is the only way you can get a real fix on the success or failure of your teaching methods."

The two sets of interviews with the teachers revealed that teachers felt that their instructional practice improved due to this project. They felt that the classroom became less teacher centered and more learner-centered. With increased communication through alternative assessment, it was easier to "take clues from [the students] on what to cover." They tried to get the students more "actively involved" in the classroom and allow them to "have input into what they're doing." One teacher said that alternative assessment "introduced the element of responsibility on the part of the student." The teachers felt that they had learned a lot from participating in this project. One teacher said that in comparison to a traditional staff development workshop, "This project is probably more wrenching but I think in the long run it will be much more beneficial in terms of what you actually get out of it."

The discussions that occurred at the Assessment Research Group meetings also demonstrated that the teachers were appreciative of increased feedback from students. The teachers noticed that the students developed a more open view of the role of the teacher; one teacher said, "The students gradually realize I'm on their level, not like a regular teacher." The teachers "learned a lot" from their students and followed through with what the students suggested, allowing student topics to drive the curriculum. One teacher said, "Earlier I would have pushed my ideas on them. Now we do what they want. For example, we did Geometry in my ABE class." Another teacher added, "One student asked about nutrition so we read about it." With increased contact with teachers in individualized conferences, students were more open and more willing to suggest things to the teachers. The teachers enjoyed the chance to become more adventurous and "experimental" based on students' feedback. The teachers who participated in the Assessment Research Group were encouraged to share their knowledge with each other and with other teachers at the agency; as a result they became more "self-critical" and willing to "raise questions" about their own teaching.

The third purpose of including learner-centered alternative assessment of student progress in an agency's official assessment policy to is to provide administrators with a comprehensive evaluation of ongoing program effectiveness when combined with quantitative data. In the past,

because the alternative assessment that was going on in teachers' classrooms was inconsistently documented and shared with unit administrators, the administrators had access only to TABE scores as a method of judging whether learners were making any progress in agency classes. With the integration and documentation of the on-going assessment methods piloted by the teachers in this project, administrators will be able to do a comprehensive evaluation of program effectiveness by combining the alternative assessments with the TABE scores. In addition, administrators will have more insight into needs for staff development, curriculum adjustment, and program design. In the evaluation surveys that the administrators in the project completed, they commented that alternative assessment helps to "identify the program's strengths and weaknesses in materials, instruction, and methodologies." To insure that administrative assessment of the program's effectiveness is tangible and not based on assumptions, teachers will need to report the results of the ongoing alternative assessment to the administrators. The teachers expressed concern that reporting the results could end up taking up a lot of time and encroach upon their ability to actually teach classes. Both administrators mentioned that written reports from teachers would be the most effective way of reporting the results of ongoing alternative assessment, because it is not feasible for administrators to review the assessment instruments used by the many students in the program. Once the program administrators have this information, they will have to devise a system for reporting the information to the program's funding sources.

## Dissemination

This project will be disseminated to other adult education programs, community organizations, the Pennsylvania Department of Education, and AdvancE.

## Conclusions

Several changes have been made in the way that the Lutheran Settlement House Women's Program's Education Unit conducts student assessment. Until this year, the only documented

program-wide assessment of the participants in the Women's Program education classes was the TABE test. TABE testing has traditionally occurred when a participant first registers, in December, at the end of the school year, or when it is recommended by the instructor for advancement into a higher level class. Starting next year, the Education Unit will supplement these standardized pre-tests and post-tests with new procedures for the initial intake of students, on -going assessment of students, and final assessment of students. There will be some uniformity in terms of what goes on in the different classrooms, but teachers and students will have flexibility when choosing what assessment methods to use.

When students register for the program, they will take a standardized pre-test that is shorter than the one used previously. In addition, all students will complete a writing sample on a topic such as, "Who was your best or worst teacher?" Students will also fill out a revised version of the unit intake sheet that will provide more useful information on student goals than the current intake sheet does. An attempt will be made to have more individualized contact between the registering students and a staff person, possibly by having fewer students at each Registration. After the Registration, students will be placed in either ABE or GED class, at which time the ABE students will take a broader standardized test and the GED students will take the Official GED Practice Tests as pre-tests.

A variety of on-going learner-centered alternative assessment methods developed and piloted by the teachers participating in the Assessment Research Group will be used to gauge students' progress on an ongoing basis. Assessment Practices such as portfolios, surveys, logs, journals, and individual conferences will be used in each ABE and GED classroom. Each teacher will pick at least two of these methods to use in their classroom, making sure to include some form of documented student self-assessment. The standardized test will also be administered half-way through the program year.

In addition, each participant's academic and personal goals will be recorded in an Individual Education Plan (IEP). The IEP will be a continuation of the initial intake from completed during Registration. The student and the teacher will discuss the individual's previous

educational experience, learning style, and immediate and future goals. The curriculum will be developed to suit each student's needs and learning style. The teacher and tutor assigned to work with the student will meet with her/him individually at least quarterly to review the IEP.

Final assessment of students' progress will be partially based on a standardized post-test such as the TABE or the Official GED Practice Tests. It will also include alternative assessment activities that build on the ongoing assessment that has been happening in the classroom and will include going back and looking at the work that the student has completed in the class. Transition from the ABE level class to the GED level class will be based on standardized test scores and the joint recommendation of the teacher and student. An Exit Form will be created to document if a student drops out of the program, receives a GED, or leaves for some other reason.

Documentation of various assessments will be kept on file in the Education Unit Office. A process will be developed so that the paperwork is organized but so that the teachers do not have to spend hours each week filing. Participants will keep portfolios consisting of their IEP, learning materials, and relevant assessment tools. The Education Unit Office will be reorganized so that paperwork and computerized records are accessible to those who need them.

Although this project focussed on assessment of students, the Assessment Research Group also discussed other aspects of assessment. The teachers in the group concluded that students should get a chance to assess their curriculum, materials, teacher and class, as well as the program as a whole. The teachers also encouraged the unit administration to continue with alternative assessment for evaluating teachers, and expressed enthusiasm about the idea of visiting and observing each other's classes.

Our conclusions about the need for alternative assessment in the classroom impact on other areas of our program. For instance, if tutors in the classroom are expected to participate in alternative assessment, our Tutor Training program must be revised to include these concepts. If new teachers are hired, they must be trained to use alternative assessment.

These conclusions will be refined and implemented over the summer in preparation for the fall classes.

## Recommendations

These conclusions are the decisions reached by one program. Another adult literacy program seeking to develop and implement learner-centered alternative assessment of students' progress would probably come up with a different system. It is impossible to have a blueprint of tools that works for every program, or every classroom. Programs should work out a system of assessment that is useful for them through lots of discussion, research, field testing, and input from students, teachers, and administrators. This assessment system should be flexible enough to grow and change with the program.

# Appendices

## Introduction

A group of from the Lutheran Settlement House Women's Program Education Unit spent the 1993-94 school year experimenting with new ways for students and teachers to figure out what kind of progress was being made in Pre-GED level adult education classes. Three teachers worked with their classes, and shared their experiences with their co-workers at meetings of an on-site Assessment Research Group.

The Appendices to the Final Narrative Report for the Section 353 grant that funded the project detail some of the processes that the research group used and some of the assessment practices of the teachers involved with the project.

## Meeting Agendas

The first section of the Appendices includes the agendas of the five meetings held throughout the year by the Assessment Research Group. The group found that it was very important to have time to sit down to talk about issues of assessment and what they did in their classes on a daily basis. Adult literacy teachers are often too busy to have the types of conversations that went on in these meetings.

The meetings took place in November, February, March, April, and May. Sometimes it was hard for us to find the time to meet. Due to the ice storms that hit the Philadelphia area, several months elapsed between the first and second meeting. We occasionally had difficulty finding an acceptable space in which to meet. Once we had to meet in our agency's Senior Center, while a Bingo game was taking place in another part of the room!

The meetings were tape recorded and transcribed so that we could review what we talked about over the course of the year.

**Learner-Centered Alternative Assessment of Student Progress**

The first meeting:
Thursday, November 11, 2:00 - 4:00 p.m..
3rd floor classroom at the LSH Women's Program.

In attendance:
Eileen Barry, Ellen Farrell, Alice Redman, Mary Taylor, Cameron Voss, Theresa Waltz

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**Agenda**

- Introduce Eileen Barry.
- Discuss why we are doing this project.
- Discuss ongoing learner-centered assessment.
- Take the pre-survey.
- Look at the surveys filled out by students.
- Compare teachers' answers and students' answers.
- Write statement of teacher and student goals.
- Discuss how to help students set goals.
- *To do for next time:*
  Co-construct an activity with students about setting educational goals.
  Do the activity with the students.
- Examine methods to assess learners' progress toward their goals.
- *To do for next time:*
  co-construct an alternative assessment idea with students.
- *To do for next time:*
  Make notes in a journal about how all of this is going.
- Set next meeting time.

## Learner-Centered Alternative Assessment of Student Progress

The second meeting:
Friday, February 4, 10:30 a.m. - 12:00 noon
Basement classroom at the LSH Women's Program.

In attendance:
Kathy Andrews-Williams, Eileen Barry, Ellen Farrell, Cameron Voss, Theresa Waltz

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### Agenda

- Review the purpose of this project.
- Report on Eileen's class observations. Set up new time with Theresa.
- Report on activity for setting educational goals with students. Do the materials and methods you use match your students' goals?
- Report on co-constructing an alternative assessment idea with students. How does the way you and your students track their progress fit in with the curriculum in your classroom?

  Alice - journal, portfolio
  Ellen - documented conferences
  Theresa - daily logs

- Review what our official and documented assessment policy is. What process would we have to follow if we wanted to change our assessment strategy?
- How can we get students' input into this process? See if teachers want to look at data with students.
- How to evaluate this project - issue of the control group.
- Continue to make notes in a journal.
- Research Group should report/present something at a Teachers' Meeting.
- Write: What questions do you have? How could this group be most effective?
- Set next meeting time.

**Learner-Centered Alternative Assessment of Student Progress**

The third meeting:
Friday, March 11, 1:00 p.m.- 3:00 p.m.
Basement classroom at the LSH Women's Program.

In attendance:
Ellen Farrell, Alice Redman, Mary Taylor, Cameron Voss, Theresa Waltz

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**Agenda**

- Review student and teacher post-surveys
- Discuss Eileen's observations in classrooms
- Discuss reading "From the Inside Out: Reinventing Assessment"
- Evaluate and suggest adjustments in assessment methods
- Discuss field testing of each others' activities - what has already happened? What can happen?
- Discuss the cycle of initial intake and on-going assessment and its relationship to current unit staff structure
- Report at Teachers' Meeting?
- Schedule interviews
- Schedule next meeting (April)

**Learner-Centered Alternative Assessment of Student Progress**

The fourth meeting:
Friday, April 22, 1:00 p.m.- 3:00 p.m.
Third Floor classroom at the LSH Women's Program

In attendance:
Kathy Andrews-Williams, Eileen Barry, Ellen Farrell, Alice Redman, Cameron Voss, Theresa Waltz

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**Agenda**

- Review the Teachers' Meeting presentation from last week

- Discuss "Adventures in Assessment" booklets

- Discuss ideas for changes across the cycle of assessment:

  * initial intake of students
    Registration, TABE, IEP, writing sample?, ???

  * on-going assessment of students
    TABE, alternative assessment options in the classroom, ???

  * final assessment of students
    TABE, something along with the TABE?, ???

- Do our conclusions about Pre-GED/5-8 also hold for other classes?

- Implications on other areas of assessment:
  * Documentation and record keeping, storage, filing, computer database
  * Evaluation and self-assessment of teachers, staff development needs
  * Program evaluation, reporting qualitative information to funding sources

- Where do we go from here?
  Documents needed for PDE final report.

- Schedule Eileen's observations in classrooms (May)

- Schedule next meeting (May)
  Plan for evaluating this 353 project
  Go over Cameron's draft of the Final Report to PDE
  Discuss implementation of our conclusions, report to LSH administration

**Learner-Centered Alternative Assessment of Student Progress**

The fifth meeting:
Friday, May 13, 10:00 a.m.- noon
Basement classroom at the LSH Women's Program

In attendance:
Eileen Barry, Ellen Farrell, Alice Redman, Mary Taylor, Cameron Voss, Theresa Waltz

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**Agenda**

• Go over draft of the Final Report to PDE

• Evaluation Section: Plan for evaluating this project

• Conclusion Section: The cycle of assessment (again): What *are* our conclusions?

* initial intake of students
  Initial Registration in August, then meeting with staff 1-on-1
  TABE, writing sample (best/worst teacher?)
  IEP interview (new Intake sheet?)

* on-going assessment of students
  TABE
  alternative assessment options in the classroom - documented!
  (choose 2 from list - what's on the list?),
  IEP monthly review
  Movement between classes?

* final assessment of students
  TABE or Practice GED test
  something along with the TABE? (any reports?)

• Other Conclusions? (again):

* Relation to tutoring (0-2 level)
* Students assessing the class, teacher, program, etc.
* Documentation and record keeping, storage, filing, computer database
* Evaluation and self-assessment of teachers, staff development needs
* Program evaluation, reporting qualitative information to funding sources

• Implementing our conclusions

• Documents needed for PDE final report:
- assessment instruments (I have Theresa's.)
- short writing by Ellen, Theresa, Alice

• Report to LSH administration: How and When?
• MCOL Workshops on Assessment and Testing
• Anything else we should talk about?

## Surveys

Throughout the year, the students, teachers, and administrators involved in the project filled out surveys created by the Curriculum Developer. The surveys provided an opportunity for people to reflect on some issues, and also provided part of the documentation for the evaluation of the project.

The Pre-Surveys were taken in the fall at the beginning of the project. The Mid-Surveys were taken in the winter, and the Evaluation Surveys were taken in the spring, at the conclusion of the project.

**Student Pre-Survey**

1. Why did you come to this program?

2. What are your academic goals?

3. What are your non-academic goals?

4. What progress have you made since you started classes here?

5. How did you know that you improved?

6. What would be the best way for *you* to know if you are making progress?

7. What would be the best way for your teacher to know if you are making progress?

8. How do you use reading outside of the classroom?

9. How do you use writing outside of the classroom?

10. How do you use math outside of the classroom?

## Teacher Pre-Survey

1. What have you gained in the past from looking at students' TABE (or other standardized test) scores?

2. What have you gained in the past from looking at students' intake sheets?

3. Have you ever used anything that you would call "alternative assessment" in your classroom? What was it and how did you do it?

4. What are your goals for teaching in general?

5. What are your goals for teaching this particular 5-8 class?

6. What do *you* think your students' goals are?

7. How have you learned what your students' goals are?

8. How do you know if your students have improved?

9. How do you think students can be involved in self-assessment?

10. In the *ideal* world, how would you:

    1) find out about your students' interests and abilities?

    2) monitor your students' improvement during the class?

    3) measure your students' progress toward their goals?

11. Why do you think assessment is important?

**Student Mid-Survey**

1. When did you come to this program?

2. Why did you come to this program?

3. Is the program what you expected it would be?

4. Describe how being in this class is helping you to reach your goals.

5. Do the things you do in class relate directly to your goals?

6. Describe how the students in your class keep track of their progress.

7. Do you think the way your class keeps track of students' progress is good? Why or why not?

8. Can you think of any other ideas for keeping track of your progress?

9. What do you read outside of the classroom? Has this changed since you started coming to class?

10. What do you use write outside of the classroom? Has this changed since you started coming to class?

11. How do you use math outside of the classroom? Has this changed since you started coming to class?

## Teacher Mid-Survey

1. Review your goals for instruction from our first meeting. Are you meeting your goals?

2. Do the things you do in class relate directly to your students' goals?

3. Describe how the students in your class keep track of their progress. (Please mark with a * anything you initiated as a result of this project.)

4. Do you get the information you need from your current assessment practices? Do you think the way your class keeps track of students' progress is a good one? Why or why not?

5. How much of the assessment in your class is:

| | |
|---|---|
| teacher assessing students | _____% |
| teacher assessing herself | _____% |
| students assessing themselves | _____% |
| students assessing teacher | _____% |
| students assessing the class | _____% |
| students assessing the program | _____% |

6. Do you think the assessment practices you are using would be good to adopt for all LSH classes? Why or why not?

7. Can you think of any other ideas for keeping track of students' progress in the classroom? Is there anything you wish you did in your classroom?

8. Is there anything you'd like to discuss with this group?

9. At one adult literacy program in Philadelphia, *every* class does *all* of the following to assess student progress: dialogue journals between teachers and students, teacher journals, class journals, goal setting and revisiting, action plans, portfolios, teacher narratives on each student, peer observations, and learners' assessment of teachers. How do you react to these assessment practices?

**Student Evaluation of Project**

1. Do you set goals for yourself in this class?

2. Give an example of a goal you set for yourself and met.

3. Give an example of a goal you set for yourself and did *not* meet.

4. Who checks if you are meeting your goals?

5. Who decides if you are making progress in this class?

6. Do you think that you have made progress while in this class? How do you know?

7. Do you feel good about the work that you have done in this class?

8. How does your teacher evaluate your progress?

9. How do your classmates evaluate your progress?

## Teacher Evaluation of Project

1. What kind of feedback do you get from students about your teaching?

2. What kind of feedback do you get from students about the materials used in the classroom?

3. How have you known that individual students in your class have made progress?

4. How have you documented your assessments of your students?

5. How have you documented your students' assessments of themselves?

6. How would you evaluate your own instruction?

7. How have individualized conferences with students affected your teaching?

8. What is the most interesting thing you have discovered about assessment this year?

9. What is the biggest change that took place in your classes this year?

10. In what ways has this project been successful?

11. In what ways has this project *not* been successful?

## Administrator Evaluation of Project

1. How does learner-centered alternative assessment of students' progress assist you in evaluating our program's effectiveness?

2. How has this 353 project changed your understanding of what goes on in classes here?

3. How could you best use the information generated by ongoing alternative assessment?

4. How would you like teachers to report the results of ongoing alternative assessment to you?

5. Once you have this information from teachers, how would you imagine reporting it to the program's funding sources?

6. How has this project changed your understanding of this agency's need for staff development?

7. Do you envision any problems in implementing the conclusions reached by the Assessment Research Group?

8. In what ways has this project been successful?

9. In what ways has this project not been successful?

## Interviews

Another part of the evaluation component to this project was periodic interviews with the participants. The following lists of questions served as guidelines for the interviews that the Curriculum Developer conducted, but the conversations were not limited to these topics. Often the people being interviewed would bring in their own questions that they wanted to discuss.

The first interviews were done in January. The second interviews were done in March and April. The interviews were tape recorded and transcribed.

**Teacher Interview Questions: The First Interview**

What was your experience with the TABE this time?

What kind of assessment is already going on in your class?

What new assessment is going on in your class?

Are you documenting what you are doing?

What in your background has influenced your views on assessment?

How do you decide your next lesson?

Is assessment separate from the other things that you do in your class?

What could this research group do that would be most helpful to you?

## Teacher Interview Questions: The Second Interview

Any update on what you're doing in class?

Is this project important to you? Why or why not?

What have you learned from this project so far?

Why is this project important to your students?

Why is this project important to the program?

Where do you think this project will lead?

Why is this project important to the field of adult literacy?

How much power do you feel that you have to make changes in the way the Education Unit does assessment?

At this point, what would be your dream assessment strategy for this program?

How would you imagine implementing it?

How do you think that the Education Unit would be ideally structured to facilitate student assessment?

Other comments?

## Administrator Interview Questions

Is this project important to you? Why?

Why is this project important to students?

Why is this project important to the program?

Where do you think this project will lead?

How do you see it in relation to the Quality Indicators?

Why is this project important to the field of adult literacy?

How much power do you feel that you have to make changes in the way the Education Unit does assessment?

At this point, what would be your dream assessment strategy for this program?

How would you imagine implementing it?

How do you think that the Education Unit would be ideally structured to facilitate student assessment?

Other comments?

## Assessment Instruments with Comments

Each of the three teachers involved with the project tried to co-construct with their students ways of setting goals and measuring progress towards these goals. In order to include the voices of the teachers in this report, each of them wrote a short piece on her participation in the Assessment Research Group.

Copies of some of the assessment tools the teachers piloted have also been included, along with the Intake form and Individualized Education plan that Kathy formulated. These tools are still being revised in preparation for use in the next year's classes.

# My Experience With Assessment

*by Alice Redman*

When I was first asked to be in the assessment group I didn't quite know what to expect from it. I was looking for a way to assess students other than with a standardized test.

## Monthly Interviews

I decided to do personal interviews with each student. I wanted to help students set goals. Since each student is different, I did not use a standard set of questions. As I interviewed each student I would write questions I thought appropriate for that student. Then I would write their answer as they gave it to me.

We set both long and short term goals. Each month I had a conference with each student to review their goals. I also helped them set monthly goals. When it was time for our conference we would look at whether their goals had been met or not. If their goal had been met we would set a new goal for the following month. If they had not been met we would look at why it hadn't. We would then work on any problems the student might be having meeting their goal. Once this was done we then set our new goals.

The monthly conference was created to help me see the progress of my students, but it also shows students how to look at themselves. It enables them to see where they are and what progress they have made. The conference also lets them see where they are doing good and where they still need to work. It keeps students from being bored because we were doing things they already knew. It helped me create a lesson based on the individual need of each student.

It was a real surprise when I asked a student if she felt that she had improved. Not only could she tell that she had improved, but also how she could see the change from when she had started. (See example of conference on the next page.)

## Portfolios

Students also kept portfolios. In them where kept their goal sheets, monthly conference sheets, writings, and a list of spelling tests they had taken. At our monthly conference students reviewed their portfolios, and decided what if anything should be added or taken out.

## Journals

Journals were kept but they were personal, so I have no idea what went in to them. I would give students 15 minutes at the end of each class to reflect on the day, and to write in their journals. I do know that students did take this time to write in them.

## Conclusion

I felt good about the assessment we did. I felt like it enhanced the students' self-esteem. It was great when you asked a student how they knew they had made progress, and they told you the difference they saw from the time they started until now. I was so happy that they had learned to see their own progress, instead of saying, "Well, my teacher told me I did," or "I improved on the TABE." I like what we created and I hope that teachers will continue to use it.

## Example of Goals Interview

**March 15, 1994**

Q. What are your goals?

*A. My goal is to get my driver's license.*

Q. What do you do to achieve this goal?

*A. I have been studying the driver's manual everyday for 15 to 20 minutes, but I have trouble remembering what I have already read.*

Q. When do you think you will be ready to take the driving test?

*A. Maybe next month.*

Q. What would be another goal for you to meet?

*A. To be able to read a book from cover to cover. I read but I never finish it. I have trouble finding books that interest me.*

Q. What kind of books do you like to read?

*A. Scary ones.*

Q. Do you go to the library?

*A. No.*

Q. Do you feel that you have improved since starting in September?

*A. Yes I have.*

Q. How do you see your improvement?

*A. Well there were words that I couldn't spell before that I can spell now. My reading is getting better. I can read things that I couldn't read before.*

Q. Can you give me an example of how your reading has improved?

*A. I went to my kids' school and they have a billboard where they put different things. Well, during Black History month they had stories about Bill Cosby and Whitney Houston. I was able to read these stories.*

Q. Couldn't you read them before?

*A. No I couldn't.*

Q. How did it make you feel to be able to read these stories?

*A. Great, and when I go to the doctor I don't need anyone to help me fill out the forms like I used to.*

Q. What goals would you like to set for June?

*A. By June I would like to improve a grade level on the TABE test. I would also like to be able to fill out a job application.*

# Assessment Research Group Report

*by Ellen L. Farrell*

## Setting Goals

On 11/15/93 I led the class through a brainstorming activity designed to come up with ways for students to identify individual educational goals and keep track of progress toward reaching those goals. I began by writing one of my goals for the class on the board. "My goal is for my students to discover that self expression through writing is empowering." We talked about what it means to become empowered and what it has meant to have power taken away from us at some point. A very open discussion developed about the ways in which parents, spouses, and society can snatch away an individual's power. It was agreed that empowerment was an important goal but that it was too general. We moved on to setting specific educational goals. Many ideas were suggested and written on the board. A copy of the list is attached.

## Tracking Progress

Following this activity, we went on to discuss ways in which we could keep track of our progress toward our goals. Many students felt that it was up to the teacher to decide and it was difficult to get the discussion going. However, after a little cajoling, several assessment activities were suggested including small group meetings/discussions, individual interviews/conferences, student journals, development and use of an assessment form, a "suggestion box" format for sharing roadblocks to goal achievement, and the ever-popular frequent quiz with a grade from the teacher. Many students also felt that they were able to keep track of their progress by how far they were in their books. (I often hear students comparing which page they are on, especially in the math book.)

Since we were already well into a weekly routine of spelling quizzes, we decided to continue with them. The students felt that mastering the spelling list was an important part of preparing for the GED test. Students also decided that regular student/teacher conferences would be the best way to keep track of individual progress towards stated goals. Finally, in order to preserve and keep track of improvement in writing skills, we decided that I would keep an informal portfolio of writings for each student. I would include a review of the most recent writings with the student during the student/teacher conference.

As a follow-up activity, on 11/22/93, each student prioritized the list of educational goals and wrote a short paragraph about which goal she perceived to be her #1 goal and why. This writing sample became an important part of the students' portfolios. Several examples are attached.

To keep a written record of student/teacher conferences, I decided to try using the forms designed by another teacher (Theresa Waltz). Several examples are attached. I attempted to conduct these conferences once each month but for various reasons, I was able to meet with each student about four times during the time that remained. I have also attached some examples of writings taken from students' portfolios that show improvement both in quantity and quality.

## Educational Goals

**List from blackboard, 11/22/93**

1. GED
2. increase learning capacity
3. making it to class
4. improving self-esteem
5. (reduce) anxiety about learning
6. (improve) reading comprehension
7. (improve) study habits
8. learn "stick-to-it" skills
9. improve memory skills
10. improve TABE test scores
11. (improve) test-taking skills

## Examples of Individual Goals

The goals were ranked in order of importance to student, with short paragraph about why student chose a particular goal as most important.

**Student #1**

Nov. 22, 1993

Educational Goals

A) Improving Self-Esteem
B) Making it to class
C) Anxiety about learning
D) Learning to stick and stay
E) Reading Comprehension
F) Improving memory skills

Anxiety about learning is scare to me. I think sometime that I can't really learn, but if I studying a little more and pray, stick and stay my memory skills would improve. That would help my self-esteem alot and having a teacher that encourage me is a very good blessing.

**Student #2**

November 22, 1993

1. making it to class
2. learning capacity
3. anxiety ablut learning
4. learn "stick to it" skill
5. improve self-esteem
6. reading comprehension
7. improve memory skills
8. study habits
9. test taking skills
10. T.A.B.E. test scores

I (figure) if I can make it to school on time, then I can do all the other things on the list. To me that is the first step on getting your GED. To come to class and, then learn. No one makes you come, you make up your own mind. That is why I said that making it to class is the most important step, or goal in my educational goals. You have to come to class to learn.

**Student #3**
GED

1. Build self-esteem
2. vocabulary spelling
3. improve Reading comprehension
4. Handwriting
5. study skills
6. Develop good test taking skills
7. Math

I realy need to work on my reading writing and spelling. I think I am doing a lot (better) then I was. I need alot more work.

**Student #4**
Educational Goals

1. GED
Learning capacity
Making it to school
Improving Self esteem
Anxiety about learinig
Reading cccomprehension
Study habits
Learn stick to it skills
Improve memory skills
T.A.B.E. test
test taking skills

1. Improve memory skills and learn to stick to it skills because every time I get something to read in class or wheather is math or reading I always think if I had it before to see if I rember it and when you explan it I learn it the same day but sometimes not quit sure But this time I am going to be more ready for T.A.B.E. test.

## Examples of Monthly Interviews

Name: Student #5

Date 4-20-94

What is the most useful thing you learned this month?

Writing skills - how sentences are written.

What would you especially like to accomplish by next month?

Learn more about correcting sentences.

What could we change that would make learning easier for you?

More intensive studies on one subject that you need help in.

Comments: Will be back in September and wants to try testing (GED) by Nov/Dec next year.

Name: Student #6

Date 4-20-94

What is the most useful thing you learned this month?

Decimals.

What would you especially like to accomplish by next month?

Finish book 2 and start Algebra.

What could we change that would make learning easier for you?

Classes longer and more often i.e. 9AM - 2PM.

Comments: Coming back next year - wants more Geography.

Name: Student #7

Reading Book: Pre-GED Social Studies

| Date | Pages done | Skills I worked on today and any comments |
|---|---|---|
| 2-7-94 | thru p48 | wants to take Social Studies Practice Test (GED) by May. |

Name: Student #7 Monthly Conference

Date 4-27-94

What is the most useful thing you learned this month?

Working in GED Social Studies book - interesting.

What would you especially like to accomplish by next month?

Wants to be in GED Science book.

What could we change that would make learning easier for you?

OK way it is.

Comments: will return next year - wants GED next year.

## Examples of Student Writing

**Student #2 above**

Sept 26, 1993

Yellow Spring

The writter of the peom "Yellow Spring" has a way with his words. His peom was verey nice. He talked about death in a nicer way. He made me understand that death is sometimes beutful. Cause some people think that death is just something or someone dieing. I thought that way too, But now after reading his peom, I know that death is something nice, beutful thing. That is why I like his peom so much. Because it made me understand that death is sometimes beutful. and not always ugly.

Jan 3, 1994

Why does the caged bird sing?

The caged bird sing because he is trapped in a cage, and the bird does not want to be there. The only way for the bird to show how he feels inside is to sing a sad song. The singing of the bird my be a way for the bird to stop hurting itself, and to coum down some. The bird also sing out of fear, because he knows that he is trapped and has no way of getting freedom. All the bird wants is to be free, out of that cage. but in his mind that will never happen. So he sing the tunes of a very sad song.

**Student #3 from above**

10/19/93

The poem was very good. I think it talk alot about Life. I know in my own life sometimes it takes me a long time to leand a lesson. Sometime I know something is not good for me but I keep doing it till I get sick and tirer of make the same mistake then I will change it.

1/6/94

Why, in your opinion, does the caged bird sing?

I think the bird is crying out for freedom. God gave him wings to fly with and someone put him in a cage where he can not move if he trys to fly he hits the cage and hurt himself. He is cry out. I feel so sorry for him. No one or anything should be cage up. The only way I thing someone or something should be lock up is if thay would hurt someone else.

**Student #5**

Wednesday September 20, 1993
The first poetry say to me that some things belong inside and some out side.
The second poetry say to be you came be happy and sad at the same time.
The color yellow means to be sad, life and death can mean flowers.
Yellow remains me of the sun, to be warm to be happy.

Nov. 22 1993
My Self Esteem has went up send I have be comeing to class. This Class and I thing the way the teacher does things makes you feel like your ready geting better at your school work and that you can get better.

Jan. 3, 1994
1) Why does the caged bird sing
The Caged bird sings because he wants to be free and he's singing for freedom.
2) Why is the title of the poem "Sympathy.
The writer feel sorry for the brid in the cage. He is a black writer and son of a slave so he unstand's being caged up he self, so he now's how the caged up bird feels.

## Assessment Research Group

*by Theresa Waltz*

### Setting Goals

Our initial assignment as members of the Assessment Research Group was to go back into our ABE classroom and *as a class* talk about alternative assessment and come up with ways to document individual goals and the progress made toward those goals.

It was very difficult to get my Pre-GED students to verbalize goals prior to obtaining a GED and whatever career they envisioned after that. The class decided that we would do three things that we would document. The first was a goal collage for which they would cut out pictures or words from a magazine and also write something to accompany it. An example is attached.

### Tracking Documents

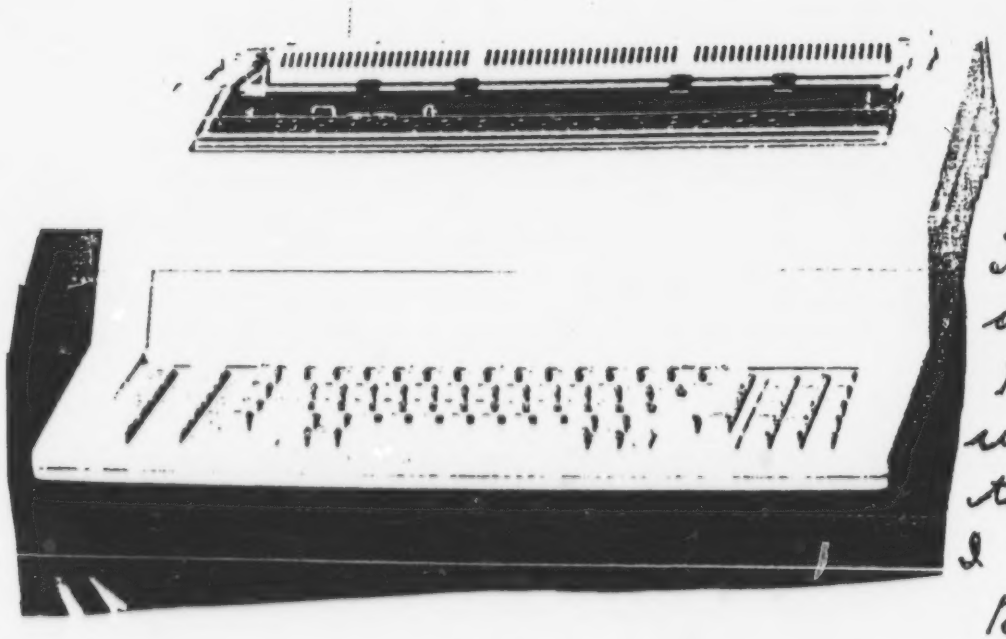
We also decided to have weekly spelling tests (something they wanted, but I really was against) and monthly individualized conferences. I developed forms to track the spelling tests and record what was said at the conferences. Three conferences can be recorded on one sheet. Examples are attached.

I also developed daily log sheets to track math and reading book progress since work in these areas was basically individualized.

All of these tracking documents were kept in individual folders and were color coded so they were easy to find.

## Example of Goal Collage

11-20-93



I would like to work on computer. This is ~~that~~ one of my goals I would like to do after I get my B.C.D.

I will study hard so I can reach this goal.

Alyce Karron, *Secretary to Dr. Joyce Brothers, Noted Psychologist, Author and NBC Radio Network Personality*

Sue S. Shore, *Executive Secretary to the CEO & President, John Harland Company*

"The way it simplifies my work is simply terrific."



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## Monthly Conferences

**Name** _____

==========Date_____

What is the most useful thing you learned this month?

_____

What would you especially like to accomplish by next month?

_____

What could we change that would make learning easier for you?

_____

Comments: _____

==========Date_____

What is the most useful thing you learned this month?

_____

What would you especially like to accomplish by next month?

_____

What could we change that would make learning easier for you?

_____

Comments: _____

==========Date_____

What is the most useful thing you learned this month?

_____

What would you especially like to accomplish by next month?

_____

What could we change that would make learning easier for you?

_____

Comments: _____

_____

**Monthly Conferences**

Name Jane Doe

==========Date 2-22-94

What is the most useful thing you learned this month?

spelling words

What would you especially like to accomplish by next month?

Get through subtraction in math

What could we change that would make learning easier for you?

—

Comments: studying for job, needs math for job

3/94 Passed Phila Public Health test!

==========Date 4-14-94

What is the most useful thing you learned this month?

To read what is there - not ad lib it

What would you especially like to accomplish by next month?

Do better in math

What could we change that would make learning easier for you?

I could show up on time

Comments: GED Practice test - LTA 50 (Thought she did badly!)

==========Date 5-31-94

What is the most useful thing you learned this month?

Ready to take parts of GED test

What would you especially like to accomplish by next month?

Improve writing

What could we change that would make learning easier for you?

Comments: Schedule GED tests at Temple

| TABE | 12/93 | | 5/94 |
|---|---|---|---|
| R | 8.2 | → | 11.7 |
| M | 0 | → | 2.5 |
| W | 3.4 | → | 4.5 |

**Monthly Conferences**

Name John Doe

==========Date 2-24-94

What is the most useful thing you learned this month?

Math - using it at work

What would you especially like to accomplish by next month?

Finish fractions

What could we change that would make learning easier for you?

—

Comments: Really making progress in spite of demands at work

==========Date 4-14-94

What is the most useful thing you learned this month?

Fractions

What would you especially like to accomplish by next month?

?

What could we change that would make learning easier for you?

—

Comments: start GED testing

==========Date 5-24-94

What is the most useful thing you learned this month?

Math

What would you especially like to accomplish by next month?

Did it - got into GED class

What could we change that would make learning easier for you?

—

Comments: 5-3-94 Practice GED test - L+A 35

| TABE | 12/93 | | | 5/94 |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| R | 7.7 | → | | 8.6 |
| M | 5.5 | → | 55 59 | 6.8 |
| W | 2.2 | → | | 2.3 |

Name: _____ Spelling Tests

| Date | Words # | Score | Comments |
|---|---|---|---|
| | 1-15 | | |
| | 16-25 | | |
| | 26-35 | | |
| | 36-45 | | |
| | 46-55 | | |
| | 56-65 | | |
| | 66-75 | | |
| | 76-85 | | |
| | 86-95 | | |
| | 96-105 | | |
| | 106-115 | | |
| | 116-125 | | |
| | 126-135 | | |
| | 136-145 | | |

Spelling Log

## Math Log

NAME_____

MATH BOOK_____

| Date | Pages done | Skills I worked on today and any comments |
|---|---|---|
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## Reading Log

NAME_____

READING BOOK_____

| Date | Pages done | Skills I worked on today and any comments |
|---|---|---|
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## New Forms for the Education Unit

Kathy, the Coordinator of the Education Unit, worked with some other people to create a new set of forms for use in the Education Unit. She sought input from the unit staff when she compiled these documents, especially Mary, the Teacher Supervisor.

The first form is a revised Intake sheet to be filled out when students register for classes. With the help of Terry Martell from the Office of Computer Services at Drexel University, these forms were put on the computer for use in entering information into the student data base.

The second form is a list of goals that students can identify when they come to the program. The format was inspired by an example from another program provided by Eileen. The goals were inspired by the list that Ellen's class brainstormed.

The third form is the Individualized Education Plan. The form was discussed at several unit meetings. At one meeting, Ferne, a teacher from the Employment unit of the Women's Program, explained the concepts behind the IEP. The unit discussed how we can take a concept that has primarily been used in Special Education settings and apply it to adult basic education.

An Exit Form is still being developed. The three documents included here are all in draft form.

Lutheran Settlement House Women's Program-Education Unit
1340 Frankford Avenue, Philadelphia, PA 19125, Phone: 426-8610

Student Name _____ Social Security Number _____

Address _____

City, State, Zip _____ _____ _____

Home Phone _____ Work Phone _____ Sex _____ Race _____

Age _____ Date of Birth _____ Today's Date _____

**Please answer ALL of the following questions:**

1. What is the name and phone number of someone we can contact in case of emergency?

   Name: _____ Phone: _____

2. What are your current living arrangements? (choose only 1)

   ○ I am the head of my household ○ I depend on someone else to support me
   ○ I am living with my spouse and children ○ I live alone
   ○ I am living with my spouse, no children ○ I live in group quarters

3. How many of your children under 18 years of age are still living at home with you? _____

4. Of these children, how many are under age 13? _____

5. What is your current employment status? (choose only 1)

   ○ Employed ○ Unemployed/able to work ○ SS ○ No income
   ○ Unemployed/unable to work ○ Welfare ○ SSI

6. Do you receive food stamps? ○ Yes ○ No

7. Are you: (choose all that apply)

   ☐ Handicapped ☐ Speaking limited English
   ☐ Institutionalized ☐ A displaced homemaker
   ☐ A homeless adult ☐ Enrolled in other Federally funded training
   ☐ An immigrant

8. What was the last grade you completed in school? _____

9. How did you find out about this program? _____

10. What is your one major reason for participating in this program?

    _____

11. What other goals do you have that you hope to accomplish while you're attending classes?

    _____

    _____

    _____

Lutheran Settlement House Women's Program-Education Unit
1340 Frankford Avenue, Philadelphia, PA 19125, Phone: 426-8610

Fiscal Year _____ Social Security Number _____

Name _____ _____

Address _____ City Philadelphia Zip _____

Home Phone _____ Work Phone _____ Race _____

Sex _____ Age _____ Last Grade Completed _____

Teacher _____ Days _____ Time _____

Location _____ Entry Date _____ Entry Level _____

| Date of Transfer: | Transfer To: | Class Info: | Class No. |
|---|---|---|---|
| | | | |
| | | | |
| | | | |

Entry Testing Results:

| Reading | Math | Writing | Entry Date |
|---|---|---|---|
| | | | |

Post Testing Results:

| Reading | Math | Writing | Testing Date |
|---|---|---|---|
| | | | |
| | | | |
| | | | |

GED Testing Results:

| Reading | Science | SS | Math | Writing | GED Score |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | | | |

GED Retesting Results:

| Reading | Science | SS | Math | Writing |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | | |
| | | | | |
| | | | | |

Final GED Score _____

Student Status: _____ Graduating Class of: _____

## Goals Questionnaire

**Q. I want to come to class because I want to....**

1. Get my G.E.D.
2. Learn more
3. Make it to class
4. Improve my self esteem
5. Be less nervous about reading aloud
6. Read better
7. Count money
8. Help my children with their homework
9. Improve my study habits
10 Improve test taking skills
11. Read aloud
12. Understanding what I read
13. Use a computer

**Lifeskills**

1. Voters registration
2. Drivers license
3. Banking
4. Budgetting
5. Speak English
6. Citizenship
7. Financial Aide forms
8. Count money
9. Completing Applications

**Q. When I leave L.S.H. I want to....**

1. Go to college
2. Get a good job.
3 Tutor other students.

## Individualized Education Plan

Name _____

Date _____ Review Date _____

Baseline Test Level _____

I. Academic Area: _____

Long Term Goal: _____

| Short Term Objective | Materials | Target Date | Assessment | Comments |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. | | | | |
| 2. | | | | |
| 3. | | | | |

Additional Comments:

II. Academic Area: _____

Long Term Goal: _____

| Short Term Objective | Materials | Target Date | Assessment | Comments |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. | | | | |
| 2. | | | | |
| 3. | | | | |

Additional Comments:

III. Academic Area: _____

Long Term Goal: _____

| Short Term Objective | Materials | Target Date | Assessment | Comments |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. | | | | |
| 2. | | | | |
| 3. | | | | |

Additional Comments:

IV. Academic Area: _____

Long Term Goal: _____

| Short Term Objective | Materials | Target Date | Assessment | Comments |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. | | | | |
| 2. | | | | |
| 3. | | | | |

Additional Comments:

## Proposed New Assessment Policy for Lutheran Settlement House Women's Program Education Unit

Registration:

- short standardized test
- writing sample
- revised version of the intake sheet
- individualized conference with a staff person

Placement in ABE or GED Class:

- At the beginning of their class, ABE students will take a longer TABE test and the GED students will take the Official GED Practice Tests as pre-tests.

On-Going Assessment:

- Individualized Educational Plan (continuation of intake sheet)
- Monthly documented conference between teacher and student
- Each class will do at least two of the following: portfolios, surveys, progress charts, dialogue journals, learning logs, other
- Some form of documented student self-assessment must be included
- Students will get a chance to assess the teacher, class, and program
- Standardized test after 100 hours of instruction (TABE or Official GED Practice Test)

Movement to Higher Class:

- Based on the following: TABE or GED Practice Test result, ongoing assessment, student self-assessment, teacher "gut feeling"

Final Assessment:

- Documented final conference between teacher and student
- More extensive version of portfolios, surveys, progress charts, dialogue journals, private learning logs, other
- Some form of documented student self-assessment must be included
- Students will get a chance to assess the teacher, class, and program
- Exit sheet
- Standardized post-test (TABE or the GED Practice Tests)

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